

TEXAS
Press Clipping Bureau

DALLAS

From

Lubbock (Tex.) Avalanche

Date MAY 3 1940

Mr. Ickes Is Impudent

AS MOST newspaper readers are aware, Amen G. Carter, the Fort Worth publisher, and Harold L. Ickes, Secretary of the Interior, have been engaged lately in a controversy.

This discourse does not attempt to deal with merits of the disagreement. Mr. Carter has demonstrated conclusively he is in no need of champions in the matter. This refers merely to one statement in a letter by Mr. Ickes to Mr. Carter which people of the nation have cause to resent.

The statement read: "I (Ickes) have gone to Texas bearing gifts—rich gifts—not a few of them solicited by the Great Editor of Fort Worth." The capitalizations of "Great Editor" were Mr. Ickes'.

The statement had reference to the various grants, loans and other allocations made available to various relief and unemployment projects in Texas through the federal department of which Mr. Ickes is head.

If one was compelled to judge from the statement alone, he would be forced to the conclusion that the allocations Texas has received have been the personal beneficences of the Secretary of the Interior. Nothing could be further from the truth.

As an individual, Ickes has had nothing to do with the disbursement of federal relief funds handled through his department. He merely has served as an agent of the federal government, bound by solemn oath to ignore the personal equation in the allocation of any monies which have come into his hands. He has violated his oath if, in a single instance, he has approved any disbursement except on the basis of need—that need being to place the money handled through his department where it would do the most good in relieving unemployment and in pulling business and industry out of its desperate depression plight.

* * *

FURTHERMORE, the money that has gone through the Ickes hands has never been in any sense a "gift." Many of the allocations have been loans—loans now being repaid. Others admittedly have been outright grants. But the money for those grants has come, or will come, from taxation. Texas is paying and will continue to pay its portion, or more, of those taxes. When Texas has received allocations of any kind through the interior department, it merely has been getting back some—not all—of the money it has poured into the federal pot.

Mr. Ickes seems to have fallen into the way of many men in high places in history who have been charged with the disbursement of huge sums of public funds. He seems to have arrived at the notion that the funds disbursed through his department are his personal property. He seems to have the idea that when he approves a grant of federal funds that he is dispensing a personal charity.

If those are his notions, it is a state of mind dangerous to the economic welfare of the nation. It suggests that he may be expected to do as he has been accused of doing already—of letting his personal likes or dislikes for the personalities connected with an application determine whether that application is granted or refused.

It hints, for example, of a state of mind—further indicated by his letter—which would lead him to an abrupt refusal of any petition with which Mr. Carter might join. It warns that the federal projects in Texas may suffer merely because Mr. Ickes is resentful of the fact that Mr. Carter refuses to see eye-to-eye with him in all matters.

Mr. Ickes long has been regarded as one of the most vulnerable spots in the national administration. He is the most cordially and most universally disliked individual in high place connected with the New Deal. His discourtesies to supplicants for official favor who have had to appear humble have become notorious.

But this is the first instance that memory recalls when he, or any other high dignitary of the new deal, has had the audacity to declare openly that the money collected from taxpayers and entrusted to him has become his for distribution as personal whim may dictate.